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ABSTRACT

As one of the more traditional Latin American societies, Colombia's educational policies have been affected by long-standing cultural beliefs including class values and social stratification. This paper examines the educational history of Colombia, provides a thorough background on its educational achievements and difficulties, and discusses recent improvements and problems. Topics covered include the pervasive influence of the Catholic Church, the shift of educational control to the government, attendance patterns, attrition rates, teacher preparedness, and lack of certification. An educational system overview is followed by thorough descriptions of elementary and secondary education, higher education, including the universities, and non-formal education. Newer educational programming is described. Citing particular reports and extensive statistics, the paper concludes by noting the remarkable progress made over recent years, given the political constraints placed on education officials. A 31-item bibliography completes the report. (CBC)

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Education in Colombia

by

Richard R. Renner

History and Background.

Although Colombia is a land of impressive natural beauty, it is also a land of great social, political and economic contrasts which have resulted in long-standing national tensions. Education is affected by issues which revolve around not only rich and poor but church and state, urban and rural, liberal and conservative, and centralist and federalist--issues which have contributed to almost a hundred armed insurrections, the most recent of which have been led by the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and M-19.

The Republic of Colombia is located in the northwest corner of South America and its 440,000 square miles is about the size of Texas and New Mexico combined. Its population of 26,631,000 (July, 1982) has an annual growth rate of 1.6%. The National language is Spanish and the population is 95% Roman Catholic. Ethnic divisions are 58% mestizo, 20% Caucasian, 14% mulatto, 4% Negro, 3% mixed Negro-Indian and 1% Indian. The literacy of the population over 15 years old is estimated at 72-75%.

The labor force of 5.9 million (1973) consisted of 30% agricultural, 15% industrial, 19% service, 13% commerce/hotels and

18% other. Unemployment in 1979 was 18.5%. Per capita income in 1981 was $1,269 with an average inflation rate that year of 24.7%. Migration from rural to urban areas is a common pattern and persons living in urban areas increased from 40% in 1951 to 69% by the late 1970's.

Major exports include coffee, fuel oil, cotton, tobacco, sugar, textiles, cattle and hides, and bananas. Major trade partners include, for exports, United States, 29%, Germany 20%, and Venezuela, 9&; for imports, United States, 35%, Japan, 10%, and Germany 8%. The economy experienced a real gross domestic product growth rate of 6.1% between 1970 and 1979. Since 1979 GDP has declined although the domestic economy was stimulated in 1981 by an acceleration in public works as specified in the nation's 1981-84 development plan.

The two main political parties are the Liberals and the Conservatives. Since 1957 there has been a "National Front" government in which these two parties govern jointly. Through regular elections the presidency alternates between the parties every four years; the parties also have parity in all other elective and appointive offices. Conservative Party nominee Belisario Betancur became president in 1982.

During the colonial era, the Roman Catholic Church remained the principal authority in the sphere of education until the achievement of independence from Spain in the early 19th century. The first schools were established in the early 16th century and during the 17th century the sons of Spanish settlers were permitted to receive schooling in the early seminaries. Although two universities were

founded by the Church before 1700, an effort to found a public university in the 19th century was abandoned because of clerical opposition. However, during the years since Independence, the government's control of education has increased progressively, although material prepared for Unesco as recently as 1971 began with the statement that "education in Colombia is organized and directed in the tradition of the Catholic religion."

Symbolic of early liberal efforts at providing public schooling was article 8 of an 1826 decree which required each school to display a banner modeled after the national flag bearing the inscription "free schooling in (name of the parish)". By 1835, 34.5% of pupils were enrolled in Lancastrian schools, a low cost monitorial scheme which had been developed in England by a young Quaker reformer. By 1837, 1.7% of the school age population was in school. However, by the 1840's, a stagnant agricultural economy and a highly stratified, urban society discouraged peasants from investing their time in schooling. Given the hierarchical nature and social status divisions of Colombian society, it was difficult for the mass of population to conceive of elementary education as a useful means of social advancement.

The person generally acclaimed as the father of public education for all is Dámaso Zapata, first the Director of Education in the department (state) of Santander and later in Cundinamarca, the state surrounding the capital, Bogotá. When Zapata assumed office in Cundinamarca, in 1872, only 3,594 children were attending school; by the end of the term a little over a year later, there were 16,489. A stern administrator, Zapata imposed a five peso fine

on any principal who left school during working hours. His effort received considerable advice and assistance from the German pedagogical mission. However, as civil strife continued to increase the pressure on national and departmental treasuries, the large landowners, who were well represented in the various legislatures, did nothing to discourage the repeal of tax laws that supported elementary education. The Church too had sought to discourage the growth of public schools in areas where its influence was not pervasive.

The traditionally dominant role played by the Church in education has inclined the people to look to it and, more recently, to government for initiative in matters related to education. Especially in rural areas, a community that might welcome an elementary school has generally waited for the government to establish one; the tradition that the community might establish and operate its own has never developed nor been considered as a right. Then too, peasant tradition sometimes accepts the notion that if God wills there be no school, this must be accepted. Rural employers often prefer peasants who are illiterate and intellectually immature and the peasantry frequently places a premium on avoiding provocation. Sometimes individuals who display more than functional knowledge are regarded negatively by their peers and in such circumstances schooling, with its tendency toward upper class values, has been considered irrelevant if not perilous.

Colombia is one of the more traditional societies of Latin America and such values continue to determine the place of education and its cultural form and content. The encyclopedic and classical

character of the curriculum persists in both elementary and secondary schools. Although a good academic secondary education continues as the major educational route to middle class status, it often functions as a central factor in solidifying long-established patterns of social stratification. Increasingly, university study is performing a similar function although current leaders think of it in more dynamic terms. In 1982, President Betancur spoke in favor of university education for all secondary school graduates while former president Alfonso López Michelson portrayed the new society in which many urban Colombians now live saying that "there has been a sexual revolution, rich people now dress like the poor, and social status is no longer recognized, but we in politics continue to live a patrician life." Colombian education is developing many new directions while old patterns persist.

Legal and Constitutional Basis

The national government has primary responsibility for public and private education. Its authority extends downward from the President of the Republic to the Minister of National Education and by delegation to the secretaries of education in the states, the national territories and large municipalities, all of which maintain their own school systems. It also extends to the several decentralized institutions concerned with educational matters. In 1974, some of 90 decentralized public agencies were affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, more than with any other government department.

Article 41 of the Constitution "...Guarantees freedom of teaching. The State shall have the right, nevertheless to inspect

and oversee public and private teaching institutions in order to secure compliance with the social objectives of education and the best intellectual, moral and physical development of the educands. Instruction shall be free of cost in the elementary schools of the State and compulsory to the extent indicated by law."

Law 65 of 1967 conferred extraordinary educational responsibilities on the national government and in implementing these, Decree Law 3157 of 1968 reorganized the Ministry of National Education and structured the educational sector. This decree created "in each of the departments (states), in the federal district, and in the metropolitan areas Regional Educational Funds (FER) consisting of contributions by the Nation, the departments, the federal district and the municipalities to tend to the sustaining and expanding of educational service in elementary, secondary and middle level vocational facilities." The objective of this reorganization was to prevent the use of national educational funds in the states for non-educational purposes, to coordinate these programs, and prevent duplication of efforts.

Law 46 of 1971 designated 13% of the regular revenues of the nation to education, a share which, by 1980, had been increased to 20%. Law 43 of 1975 nationalized secondary education (educación media) and specified that the national government was to gradually assume responsibly for this level of education, beginning with 29% of the total in 1976 and ending with 100% in 1980.

Prior to such legislation the national government's direct involvement had been quite limited. A 1974 school register listed only 33 national primary and secondary schools in Bogota out of a

total of well over 2,500. In the cities, national departmental and municipal schools coexist at the same levels of instruction. However, recent legislation has had the effect of giving increasing control of these systems to the national government.

Decree 088 of 1976 made five years of primary schooling compulsory and tuition free in public schools and established the the modalities of pre-school, basic (primary and early secondary), upper secondary (media) and university. Finally, Decree Law 128 of 1977 established primary and secondary teaching as a national responsibility and Decree 2277 of 1979 set standards of professional practice.

The Regional Educational Funds (Fondos Educativos Regionales, FER) have acquired a special importance in recent years. In order to appreciate their importance it is necessary to be aware of the circumstances which required reform. According to a 1974 Memoria of the Minister of National Education, of every 1,000 Colombian children age 7, only 770 were enrolled in first grade. The remainder, for the most part, remained unschooled and illiterate. Of the 770, 357 passed on in due course to the third grade of the primary school; 413 left the system between the first and second grades and were considered functionally illiterate. Some 216 completed fifth grade, the end of formal primary schooling. Of the original 1,000, 119 enrolled in the first year of secondary school; 60 went on to finish the 4th year of the six-year program. Finally, 37 received the title of bachiller signifying that they had completed the total of the 11-year pre-university program. Twenty-five of these entered the university and 13 went on to finish

their third year. Eleven eventually completed university course requirements (egresados) and were considered qualified professionals while another seven completed the formal degree. From these data it is clear that a large proportion of Colombian youth have had only limited contact with schooling.

In theory, the national government has had authority to establish educational policy throughout the country. In practice, power has always been relatively fragmented among a wide range of special interest groups. The national government has contributed to the salary of teachers in departmental schools since 1961 but until 1968 it lacked sufficient power to regulate the way in which its contribution was used since the naming of teachers and the setting of salaries was in the hands of ministers of education in the various states.

Previously, a line of communication existed through the primary and secondary school inspectors of the country's six inspection zones, but in fact the overworked inspectors spent most of their time on the accreditation of schools. To the extent to which national control was effective, it took place only through political pressure exerted by the Minister of National Education on the local governor and through him to the departmental minister of education.

In 1968 the departmental governors agreed to adhere to the national ministry's educational policy on pain of not receiving national funds. In particular, the hiring of unqualified teachers was to cease and a procedure of recruitment of new teachers by examination was installed. However, progress was uneven and in the year 1980 for example, the National Testing Service (Servicio

Nacional de Pruebas) reported testing of teachers in only one district, presumably Bogotá, where a strangely rounded number of 10,000 tests were administered.

If the terms of the contracts signed by the national ministry and the various states were violated, the monthly contributions assigned to non-conforming states were to cease and unexpended funds were to be refunded to the national government. A national ministry delegate was sent to each state to supervise the process and to exercise veto power over the hiring of uncertified teachers. Because delegates were to reside in departmental capitals, the national ministry maintained that the change was one of decentralization when in fact it was just the opposite. Although initially some of the delegates were accepted, many were frozen out. Compliance was poor because the state secretaries of education were usually aspiring politicians who were under pressure to respond to political as well as educational priorities. Nonetheless, by 1973 the scheme was said to be functioning well in 8 of the 23 departments plus Bogotá; in five it was adequate, and in the other ten it was in disarray.

Prior to the FER reform the degree of autonomy that each secretariat of education had in relation to the national ministry was almost total. Although theoretically bound by national guidelines, state ministries could hire, dismiss, supervise, promote, transfer and train personnel in their own way. Even worse, funds earmarked for paying teachers were often diverted to more politically visible projects such as roads or buildings. Many

teacher strikes were a reaction to salaries which were sometimes as much as six months in arrears.

In many states, teaching and administrative positions, as well as departmental and municipal budgets had been based on political rather than professional considerations. For example, in March, 1970, just prior to elections, 420 individuals in one department alone were were given teaching positions, mostly without the required teaching credentials. The Ministry of National Education noted in 1976 that "There are thousands of teachers now, and others appointed in earlier years, that don't have anything to do. They have no school and they aren't teaching but they are drawing a salary." This situation, was referred to as the "open vein." However, the late 1970's marked the relatively successful end of the practice of governors hiring teachers without sufficient money in state budgets to pay them. The nationalization law of 1975 had the effect of enhancing the national ministry's ability to refuse unbudgeted and unqualified appointment in the states. By 1980, it was reported that the ministry was absorbing only about 20 to 30 positions per year which it had not approved in advance. However, the national ministry's official delegates in the states were now behaving more politically in approving appointments than previously.

Most teachers are now hired on the basis of prior national ministry approval and are usually qualified for the job. Not only this, but teachers are more likely to be paid on time and their level of pay is more likely to be comparable to that paid in the private sector. Nonetheless, by the end of the decade 8 to 10 of

the states and national territories still were not cooperating with the Regional Educational Funds.

A long range benefit of the Regional Educational Funds is the fact that national-state communication in education has been greatly enhanced by the presence of its offices in the states. More accurate knowledge of local conditions around the country has also been a benefit. It seems clear too that important growth has taken place. Primary school enrollments expanded 87% between 1964 and 1977 and retention rates between grades one and five, a rough measure of school efficiency, improved from 32.2% to 40.1% between 1974 and 1980.

Educational System Overview

School attendance officially begins at age seven and is legally mandatory through the fifth and final grade of elementary school (Primaria). A public primary school is generally known as an escuela; private primary as well as secondary schools are frequently referred to as colegios. Pre-schools also exist, especially in the cities, but only .4% attended in 1974. However, until very recently, many rural communities had no school at all or possessed a school with only two or three grades.

Secondary education is six years long and consists of a four year basic cycle and either a two-year advanced or vocational cycle. Decree 88 of 1976 redesigned the educational system. It made preschool education a legal part of the system; it created a single level of Basic Education consisting of nine grades broken into a free five-year compulsory first cycle. Youth may leave at the end of the second cycle which coincides with the legal working age of

15. They may also continue on with vocational secondary education or prepare for a job in the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA) program. At the end of this nine years, two additional years are required to complete the academic bachillerato diploma at the level of Vocational Secondary Education (Educación Media Vocacional). An additional two years leads to completion of the Intermediate Professional Education Program. Completion of the bachillerato also allows for entry into the university.

The school year extends from February until November. Spanish is usually the language of instruction with the principal exception a few schools administered by foreign organizations which use the language of the sponsor's country. In such cases they are required to employ Colombian teachers to conduct courses, in Spanish, on Colombian geography and history.

Decree 1598 of 1934 established the following grading system for all public schools: 5 very good, 4 good, 3 satisfactory, 2 poor, 1 very poor. For a secondary student to take a final examination in any subject, Decree 45 of 1962 specifies that he must have attended at least 90% of the required classes and have received at least five grades--one for each month or nine for two semesters. If a student's monthly grade average is less than 2, he is ineligible to take the final examination and his monthly average becomes his final grade. Class participation, attitude, and similar bases for grading are usually minimized by teachers in order to avoid criticism of their evaluation methods. Such precautions are important because secondary students show a comparatively high failure rate.

By the mid-1970's most of the primary enrollments were public while over half of those in secondary were private. Few working-class children reached secondary education. Between 1964 and 1977, total national enrollments grew 87% for the primary level, 314 for secondary and 527% for higher education. Of this, public sector enrollments for primary were more or less constant at 86%, there was an increase in the secondary proportion, and a decrease in the public universities' share. As a result of such changes, the economically active sector totally lacking in formal educaion declined from 27.1% in 1964 to 16.4% in 1978 and the proportion which posessed education beyond the primary school increased from 12.3 to 28.7%.

Except for the primary level, enrollments compared favorably with the rest of Latin America. In 1975, 68.9% of the primary age cohort was in school compared with 80% for Latin America as a whole according to Unesco figures for 1970; the 34.9% for secondary was nearly identical to the Latin American comparison group while the 8% for higher education exceeded it by 1.5% (6.5%). A great deal of improvement was also in evidence between 1960 and 1980. The educational participation of the 6-11 age group went from 28.8% to 63.8% according to the Statistical Abstract of Latin America.

Although public education is often of good quality, there is a stigma attached to sending one's child to a public elementary school because it is often regarded as pauper education. Education is closely related to individual income and is regarded by social scientists as a highly profitable personal investment at the primary and secondary levels.

The private sector is made up of schools operated by the Catholic Church, schools operated by other religious denominations, profit making and non-profit private schools, and cooperative schools conducted by communities. More than 700 institutions have been affiliated with the National Federation of Catholic Schools. Although the Constitution guarantees freedom for private ownership and operation of schools, they must be licensed and meet certain standards. In most cases they must teach the official curriculum and are subject to supervision by public inspectors. The government has provided some financial support to private institutions which provide a prescribed numbers of scholarships to children from families of limited means.

Elementary Education

Complete elementary education (primaria) consists of grades one to five. Primary education contributes to social mobility by conferring literacy which in turn enables a person to enter the mainstream of national life. However, in rural areas, schooling is often seen as having limited value to agricultural day workers on commercial farms and plantations and not very useful to subsistence farmers. Superior work performance is not generally rewarded by higher pay or promotion to more responsible positions; these are generally reserved for relatives or special friends.

Dussán de Reichel, who recently studied traditional child-rearing patterns in a Colombian village of 2,000 found that during his third year of life, for example, the youngster expresses anger by overturning his food or feeding it to one of his pets; this is interpreted by parents as a fit of bad temper and the child is

punished by having to go without food for the rest of the day. Parents expect children to accept the standards that they teach them, but if after the better part of a year the children take no notice, the parents first remonstrate with them, shout at them and then smack their behinds. However, a good bit of emphasis is placed on avoiding physical punishment for too much is believed to make the child become a "sin verguenza", that is without shame, without a conscience. Ideally the child should be so well brought up that he can be controlled with a glance and mothers are often seen to do so.

Childhood rewards often take the form of endearing looks and smiles from parents and relatives. Children are often encouraged by being given a special treat--a sweet or some fruit, and item of clothing, or very rarely, a toy. It is thought that the child's behavior should never be praised or commented upon and that they should never be the center of attention. Originality and initiative are neither encouraged nor rewarded; adults are not lenient to children nor do they excuse their misdeeds because of youth; on the contrary, children are always required to act as if they were small adults. In this small town setting, adults patiently teach their children how to do things, first showing them what to do and then correcting them if they make a mistake. But as a rule, there are some differences. The mother is physically close to her daughter while they are working; the father shows his son how to do something only once, then leaves him by himself for a while and comes back to see the result. In this way the son is trained to work with a degree of independence.

Apart from bringing the children up to be good Catholics, parents encourage characteristics such as obedience, perseverance, submissiveness and a deep sense of responsibility toward the family group. Spontaneity and initiative are discouraged as well as physical aggressiveness. Traditional culture stresses peace, order and respect for the individual, however, the growth of rural tourism is having an impact on these child rearing patterns and they are beginning to undergo change.

On the pre-school level, only 147,113 were enrolled in 1979, up from 96,566 in 1975. In the latter year, 69.3% of the pupils in 2,500 schools were in private institutions. Most of the public facilities were in the poorer sections of large cities.

Primary education has grown rapidly. Between 1964 and 1977, enrollments increased 87% as compared with a growth of school age population of only 36%. Private school enrollments amounted to only 14.9 in 1980. The percentage of primary school age children (age 7-14) enrolled in school reached a high of 80% in 1977, the result of an increase in the number of teachers and classrooms and the establishment of double sessions. Teaching personnel increased from 50,250 in 1964 to 139,221 in 1980, an average increase of 7.6% per year. According to Unesco, primary enrollments actually dropped between 1979 and 1980, from 4,337,607 to 4,168,200. Planners claimed that the system had finally developed an ability to cope with first grade enrollment pressures.

In several respects, there were signs of greater efficiency in the system. Retention, defined as the proportion of first year pupils who complete the fifth (and final) year of primary was

improved. Comparison of the 1969-74 cohort with that of 1976-80 revealed rates of 32.2% and 40.1% respectively. Retention was vastly better in the cities with rates at 60.%; rural rates were 16.7%. Even the teacher-pupil ratio declined, from an average of 41.6 pupils per teacher in 1970 to 31.4 in 1980. Per pupil costs of providing education increased from an average of 270 pesos in 1970 to 680 pesos (adjusted for inflation) in 1980.

As for average years of primary schooling completed, 1974 data show 3.11 grades in urban areas and 1.55 rural. However, the actual range was large, even within the urban category with 3.81 in Valle and 0.94 in Guajira. Between 1966 and 1974, there has even been a decline in the number of years pupils take to complete the five year program, from six years and one month to five years and eight months, representing a reduction in grade repetition, especially in rural areas.

Secondary Education

Secondary education (educación media), grades six to eleven, is almost exclusively an urban phenomenon despite the efforts of various governments to take it to rural areas by means on Núcleos Rurales, Technical Agricultural Institutes (Institutos Técnicos Agrícolas) and Concentraciones de Desarrollo Rural. The Concentraciones were four-year secondary level programs aimed at the sons of farmers. Besides agriculture, they teach the administration and management of agricultural business. Estimates in the mid-1970's indicated that only 1.1% of secondary students were in the latter institutions although their proportion of the total was increasing.

The most common type of secondary institution is the general or academic secondary school which awards a diploma of bachillerato. This term is customarily used to describe the course of study and the kind of school as well as the diploma awarded. Its curriculum is designed to prepare students for the university and is divided into a basic four-year cycle of general studies and a two year cycle of broad professional concentration. These schools are designed to impart a broad cultural background including many subjects that are customarily reserved for the college level in the United States. In the early 1970's students attended these schools for a 38-hour six-day week.

Secondary enrollments grew from 818,839 in 1970 to 1,806,082 in 1980, an annual rate of 8.2%; in the public sector the increase was 9.3%. The rapid growth of secondary education is a result of the increased number of pupils completing primary school. Girls represented about half of total enrollment. Tuition is generally charged in secondary school and the cost of books and uniforms are also expense factors. In 1977 several thousand students in 31 communities took examinations in an effort to qualify for secondary school scholarships.

Data from 1975 show the proportion of the total enrollment in various types of secondary schools; the percentages in parentheses indicate the proportion of students in that specialty enrolled in public institutions: Classical academic (bachillerato) 74.8% (50.1%), industrial 4.0% (82.7%), business and secretarial 10.7% (33.8%), normal (elementary teacher training) 5.2% (75.8%),

Institutos Nacionales de Educación Media (comprehensive secondary schools) 3.4% (100%), nurses aides 0.1% (62.3%, other 0.4% (52.5%).

Contrary to the wishes of planners, the classical bachillerato has gained an increasing role in recent years. In 1966 it represented 62.8% of enrollments; in 1980 it was 74.5%. This growing role confirms it as an indispensable intermediate step for university admission and as the academic route chosen by the majority of students. Other secondary programs also showed increased enrollments but reflected slight declines in their proportion of secondary studies, with the exception of agriculture which demonstrated proportional increases.

The proportion of the age cohort enrolled in secondary education increased from 14% in 1964 to 38.3% in 1980; however there were sharp differences between urban and rural with 1980 rates of 65.9% and 9,5% respectively. Nontheless, it is not unusual for rural youth to live with urban relatives while attending secondary school or university. Indeed, entire families sometimes move to urban areas when their children reach secondary age.

There is an interesting relationship between the number of students completing primary school and those entering secondary school. In 1974-75, the ratio was 95% while in 1980 it had dropped to 81.4%. This suggests that the recent addition of the two or three years required to complete five year primary offering in rural areas may not have been well adapted to secondary entrance expectations. Retention rates have also improved. In 1976, 48% of those who had begun secondary education in 1971 received their bachillerato with the largest dropout occurring in the first two

years, while in 1980, the proportion of successful students was 53.6%.

Despite these signs of progress, on the basis of official tests in 1975 and 1976, the only data available, there was an almost general decline in student achievement, suggesting a deterioration in the quality of secondary education for that period. In particular, the data showed poor performance among normal school students. Tests conducted earlier also showed that academic performance correlates positively with family income level with the exception of students from extremely affluent backgrounds.

Although the number of secondary teachers also rose 202% between 1964 and 1977, enrollments increased 284%. However, although the annual growth rate for public school teachers was 22.1% between 1967 and 1977, it had slowed to 1.5% between 1977 and 1980. Many secondary and university teachers are part time, a characteristic of Latin American countries. Gains in the quality of teachers as measured by amounts of formal preparation are demonstrated by the fact that in 1964 only 10% of public and private elementary teachers had complete academic and pedagogical preparation while in 1980 this had increased to 33.4%. Students-per-teacher ratios had also changed, from 14 to 1 in 1964 to 20 to 1 in 1980. Operating costs per teacher (adjusted for inflation) nearly doubled between 1970 and 1980 while real costs per student increased from 980 pesos to 1370 pesos.

Instructional methods rely heavily on the lecture combined with enough classroom recitation to insure that students have adequate comprehension of the presentation. Extensive memorization of the

teacher's notes is one of the best ways to be a successful student at the secondary or university level. Separate schools for the sexes, especially at the secondary level, is a well-developed tradition.

As in most of Latin America, a distinction is drawn between the academic and vocational secondary school. The division is so sharp that although it is possible in some instances for vocational graduates to go on to universities, the term secundaria is generally applied only to the academic schools. The appeal of the academic sector reflects a continuing disregard for manual labor and a tendency to attach little social value even to the highest manual skills. The largest vocational enrollments have been in the programs where white collar secretarial and business skills are taught.

The upper classes have embraced technical careers in principle, at least as far as this is measured by university degrees. But the system remains weak at the middle technical levels and at that of mechanic or skilled workman. Much of Colombia's upper and middle classes are technically trained but are still affected by aristocratic values. Many manufacturing enterprises are weakened by lack of close supervision by their elegant administrators who form part of a bureaucratic rather than a shop culture. It is doubtful that any member of the white collar class or above would consider overhauling a motor, even as a hobby.

One effort to overcome this problem are the National Institutes of Secondary Education (INEM) created by decree 1962 of 1969. Offered as a six year post-primary program granting a bachillerato

with specialization beginning in the third and fourth years, it is a program which seeks to get away from th theoretical and memoriter emphasis of the traditional bachillerato. Besides the humanities and science. it offers programs in such fields as accounting, secretarial, metalworking, electricity and electronics, construction, industrial chemistry, crops and animal industries, health services, and home and community services. The program's biggest problem has been in finding sufficiently qualified staff to teach in applied fields of study. Another was the purchase and installation of costly equipment, some of which remained in customs or uninstalled for several years.

A Unesco group's evaluation of one of the INEM schools in 1976 concluded that it was more general than technical in spirit. About 50% of the students went on to higher education and the remainder to the labor market. About 65% of the students came from lower middle class or working class families. These institutions have been criticized as being a copy of the comprehensive high schools of the United States and praised as the only valuable effort that has been made to counteract the traditionalist orientation of Colombian secondary education.

Higher Education

Colombian higher education's growth has been recent and dramatic. Only five small universities were founded during the first three centuries of its history with eight more in the 19th century and 78 in the first 76 years of the 20th. The rapidly expanding institutions of the 1960's and 1970's ranged from liberal to conservative in outlook and so many young professionals were

prepared during these years that a large number migrated to other countries, especially the United States. Between 1954 and 1975, 8,806 Colombians were admitted to the United States in a professional capacity, nearly a fourth of whom were physicians or other medical personnel. The rate of emigration had begun to decline substantially by the early 1970's. Motives for emigration included better income, opportunities for fuller professional development, and the difficulty of finding suitable employment or research opportunities in Colombia. However, this was not seen as severe a problem as the unemployment and underemployment of professionals in Colombia itself. At the same time, since a degree in law, medicine or engineering was the traditional route for the upper classes through the university, it was not unusual to find many such persons who did not practice their profession after graduation.

What is higher education? Decree 089 of 1976 defines it as those professional programs of a minimum of eight academic semesters which begin after the bachillerato or of four semesters if they begin at the end of the Técnico Professional Intermedio. As of June, 1977 there were 33 public universities or institutions of university status and 55 private. According to the Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES), "There is no unique institutional model that can be considered 'the Colombian university.'" There is a common base in the traditional pattern of the Latin American university inspired by the Napoleonic model and in the closely knit association of professionals which

trains its own members. But in reality, Colombian universities form a mosaic of structure with some common fundamental features.

University enrollment tripled between 1970 and 1980. Out of a total enrollment of 271,630 in 1980, 37.1% were in public institutions. Women constituted 44.6% of all students, up from 26% in 1970. They were somewhat less likely to drop out, possibly because they were more numerous in private institutions. Enrollments in the private sector have been steadily upward; the public sector declined between 1978 and 1980 due to slackening demand and in part because several universities were closed. In private institutions, first year enrollments grew from 42,000 in 1976 to 72,000 in 1980. The area of greatest growth was in private university night programs. Nearly two-fifths of all university enrollments were in night sessions.

Between 1970 and 1980, the number of egresados had tripled. In 1980, there were about 26,00 graduados as compared with 31,000 egresados. An egresado is distinguished from a graduate by the fact that the former has completed all his course work except the comprehensive examinations and thesis. Many universities make little distinction when they employ faculty as to whether or not they posess a full degree.

What are some of most popular fields of study? In 1980, Administration and Economics were most favored with 32% of total egresados of which 80% were graduated from private institutions. Next in order was Education with 16%, Engineering with 13%, and Health Science and Law at 10% each. Eighty-six percent of Law degree recipients were in the private sector. Architecture and Fine

Architecture and Fine Arts totaled 7%, Social Sciences 5%, Agriculture and related fields 4%, Physical Sciences (Ciencias Exactas) 2% and Humanities 1%. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of egresados in Administration and Economics grew from 1,500 to about 9,000; in Education the growth was from 1,300 to 6,100.

Such extensive growth in university population has made admissions practices increasingly important. Sociological studies show that the admissions tests given by a goodly number of universities are based on skills developed in middle and upper class culture; other studies show that such tests favor students of the classical bachillerato, the curriculum which predominates in the majority of private secondary institutions, to the detriment of students prepared in other programs. In 1978, few universities accepted the results of the National Testing Service; however, in accordance with Decree 80 of 1980, 151,127 aspirants took the Service's entrance examinations in that year.

The organization most active in the field of higher education is the Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES). ICFES's principal activities in the 1980's consisted of educational planning, feasibility studies for new institutions of higher education, advice on institutional development, and ways to improve university administration, including admissions, training of personnel, as well as studies of university finance and the collection of statistics. Its wealth of published data enable interested persons to discover, for example, that in 1980, three universities offered programs in physics and that 42 persons com-

leted study in this field, or that 17 persons completed the country's only program in textile design, or that a private academy of professional draftsmanship graduated 594 students in six different programs and that half of these were women. ICFES has also played a central role in seeking to bring order and quality into Colombia's variegated system of post-secondary education.

A further distinguishing feature of Colombian universities is their use of part-time faculty. The term "full time" (tiempo completo) means that an instructor may lecture in several institutions and also practice his profession; another term, "exclusively full time" (dedicación exclusiva) means that a person works only at a particular university, while hora catedra implies service on an hourly or single course basis. Of the 31,136 higher education faculty in 1980, 11.4% were "part time" and 54% were hora catedra. Of the total, 63.9% held a professional degree such as engineer or doctor, 16.9% a licenciado (similar to an advanced bachelor's degree), 8.3% the magister, 1.8% the Ph.D. and the remainder tecnico, experto or similar title. In the 1970-1980 period, the use of full-time faculty declined while hora cátedra increased.

In addition to universities, there were 14 public and 13 private Institutos Tecnológicos as of 1977. These technological institutes are basically dedicated to the preparation of technologists (technicians) in short careers not longer than eight academic semesters. In addition, four military academies were also recognized as institutions of higher education. Efforts to offer several university courses somewhat along the lines of the Open

University met with serious logistical and organizational problems as well as above-average drop out rates.

The Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Technical Studies Abroad (Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior, ICETEX) was founded in the 1950's to encourage a wider cross section of Colombians to acquire particular skills from the more industrially advanced nations. It set out to replace favoritism and political influence in student selection with ability and personal merit criteria. In recent years its emphasis has shifted more toward domestic educational loans and grants.

Colombians continue to study abroad. Between February and November, 1980, for example, ICFES validated 327 foreign degrees, mostly returning Colombians. Among the countries most commonly represented were, Ecuador 67 individuals, USA 58, Spain 28, Italy 28 and USSR, 25. The most common subjects studied were medicine with 93 cases, unspecified post graduate 51, education 34, and agriculture 34. Data for 1978 showed 490 Colombian students studying in the Soviet Union and 530 others in Eastern Europe. A 1971 report stated that 55 professors at the National University in Bogotá were graduates of Russia's Patrice Lumumba University.

By the mid-1960's the use of foreign loans and grants had become a common feature of Colombian university budgets and the specific use of the money was usually designated by the lender. In 1965 over 20% of some university budgets came from abroad, mostly the United States. In 1966, the United States Department of State assembled a team of experts from the University of California at

Berkeley to plan a reform called the Plan Básico or Basic Plan. According to Latin American critics, the Plan's overall aim was to link the third world and first world economies more effectively through political and cultural components. In the eyes of its supporters, especially those accustomed to United States style higher education, it represented an earnest effort once and for all to bring the benefits of a modern system of higher education to what were seen as the underdeveloped and unstable universities of Colombia.

The Plan Básico team's recommendations consisted of several basic themes: the formation of a national directive body for all public universities, the reorganization of the internal structure of the university, the creation of professional administrators, and the regulation of student participation in university admissions. There was also a reformulation of norms and standards including those concerned with admissions, hiring, promotion and accreditation as well as a redirection of the general objectives and purposes of higher education. More specifically, it called for the formation of a National University Council which would assume power over the entire university system, a greater emphasis on the role of technical training, the development of a uniform admissions policy based on a national testing service and encouragement of a student culture to take the place of the anticipated depoliticization of students.

Many of these changes would have had the effect of wresting from the individual facultades (teaching collectives or colleges) control over the admission of students and would place them in the

hands of a centralized administrative apparatus. The idea, of course was to free admissions from the "inevitable personal biases of faculties which contaminate many of the tests now in use." One effect which concerns critics of the Plan Básico is that it might result in the selection of students from the higher socio-economic classes over those with fewer resources. Also, the "good" students would end up in the universities while the "inferior" ones would go to the institutos--a result which has been borne out in practice with a university/institute and a public/private university division. The National Testing Service reported that higher education admission examinations were given in 74 different cities in 1980. It was also recommended that students pay tuition in order to give them a greater sense of responsibility for their studies. Tuition thus was charged students on the basis of family income. By 1980, one-third of all students had also taken out some form of educational loan.

When the Plan Básico was first published, students went on a campaign of opposition which ultimately resulted in the "strongest student rebellion in the history of Colombia," the Student Movement of 1971. The strike involved 75% of all students and also prevented enforcement of the University Reform Law which was based on the Plan Básico. Higher education came to a complete halt for a year. Significantly, the students' effort received more support from faculty groups than ever before in Colombia's history. Following parliamentary elections in 1972 in which the traditional political parties were successful, the appointment of a new minister of education and a new university rector led to the dismissal of

certain faculty and students thereby breaking the back of the movement. By 1977, the Colombian student movement, despite its once vigorous opposition to the Plan Básico, was said to be in disarray.

From the critics' perspective, one of the more objectionable proposals in the Plan Básico was the National University Council. It was so constituted that representative bodies to which the faculty or students had access could only make recommendations, there being no student or faculty representatives on the central governing board. This had the practical effect of virtually eliminating student and faculty influence in university administration. Nor did the government recognize the right of faculty to organize and bargain collectively.

Indeed, at its 11th Congress, the Colombian Federation of Educators resolved, in part, that "The education reform is part of a series of government reforms propelled by a North American Imperialism (designed) to bring the level of education to meet the economic demands of imperialism and the dominant governing classes, (and is) oriented toward imparting a vocational and technical education, adapted to particular sectors of production... The Federation will struggle for the nationalization of education, and against its subordination to foreign interests."

In 1980, the Turbay Ayala government, backed by military intervention in the universities, once again insisted on implementing the Plan Básico and, according to a critic, finally succeeded in doing so. In late 1983, Minister of National Education Rodrigo Escobar Navia was criticizing "doctoritis" and praising the

role of the technologically educated thus suggesting that the Reform Básico continued essentially on course.

Administration, Finance and Research

Although school enrollments increased geometrically in the 1960's and 1970's, physical plant often remained inadequate. In the early 1960's, only half the public schools had running water, and a third electricity. The percentage of the national budget assigned to education increased from 13.6% in 1970 to 20% in 1980, representing an overall annual increase of 8.6% for the decade. Real national expenditures increased 77% for the period while state expenditures declined 23%. By 1980, the national government was paying 85% of school costs and the states the remainder. The national budget for higher education, expressed as a percentage of GNP, experienced a sharp drop after 1972 level.

Colombia has received much more foreign and technical assistance than most Latin American countries. From 1961 to 1972 the educational system received the equivalent of $107 million of which $14 million came from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD or World Bank), $28 million from the Inter American Development Bank and $65 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development. By 1980 Colombia had incurred a total of $6 billion in foreign debt, of which 72% of the credits and loans came from the United States.

Average educational costs varied considerably. Data for 1972 placed urban primary costs at 731 Pesos per pupil and rural at 973. On the secondary level, the traditional bachillerato program was

least expensive at 2,765 pesos per student while the most costly were the vocational offerings, especially agriculture and the INEM's which averaged somewhat over 6,100 pesos per pupil. Despite the added cost of their programs, vocational graduates earned slightly less on the labor market than bachilleres without vocational preparation.

Funding for public universities also varies. In 1980, 98.9% of national government contributions went to public institutions. In public universities, 97.2% of the average budget went toward operations; in private institutions, 59.9% went to operations and the rest to investment. The 1975 budget for the University of Antioquia, for example, consisted of 74% from national funds, 12% from state contributions, and the rest from its own or other sources.

COLCIENCIAS, the national agency responsible for carrying out national research policy, noted in the early 1970's that almost half of the expenditures for research were made by decentralized institutes attached to the various government ministries. Research is also closely linked to post graduate studies in the universities although this forms only a very small portion of total university activity. Those universities best known for their research efforts are the universities of Antioquia, del Valle, National of Bogotá, Los Andes and Javeriana.

Some of the better known research libraries include the National Library with 400,000 volumes, the Luis Angel Arango library of the Bank of the Republic with 150,000, National University (Bogota) with 130,000, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana with

150,000, University of Antioquia with 150,000, and the Pedagogical University of Tunja with 68,000. Since many universities are decentralized into relatively autonomous colleges, the central library figures tend to understate the size of existing research resources.

Non-Formal Education.

The great diversity which characterizes Colombia's cultural tradition is reflected in its efforts to develop new styles of education, both public and private. Some of the public efforts have been criticized as merely piecemeal attempts to demonstrate to the world that "we also have similar programs." Yet many others reflect the genuine enthusiasm of better educated Colombians who study abroad on a grand scale and then attempt to put into practice selected insights from their special experience. ICETEX, for example, was inspired by a masters thesis written by a Colombian for a U. S. degree and it has since aided thousands of Colombians to study both abroad and in domestic institutions. Still other efforts are truly indigenous and are recognized throughout the world for their unique contributions.

Perhaps the best known of these efforts are the radiophonic schools of Peoples' Cultural Action (Acción Cultural Popular or ACPO) with 43,000 students in 11,000 "schools" in 1974. Founded in 1947 by a young Colombian priest, Jose' Joaquin Salcedo, the effort developed into regular broadcasts calculated to develop basic literacy and numeracy among illiterate rural peasants and also sought to develop in its listeners a recognition of their responsibility as individuals for their own development. One of the

titles to supplement the basic texts of the radio course and a weekly newspaper, EL CAMPESINO, distributed at rural Catholic churches and directed at the improvement of rural life. The volunteer rural youth who originally served as an adjuncts to the radio lessons were joined by other field workers who gave direction and leadership to the effort. Institutes for the training of field workers were established in Sutatenza and Caldas and the original amateur station has been replaced by four powerful transmitters. Between 1968 and 1972, ACPO processed some 66,000 letters annually to and from newly literate peasants. The campaigns and published materials emphasize themes such as vegetables gardens, compost pits, fish ponds, community services, balanced diet, beekeeping, running water for the home, latrine construction, and methods of marketing products.

The National Apprenticeship Service (Servicio Nacional de Apprendizaje or SENA) is one of several semi-autonomous occupational training organizations which have emerged in Latin America during the past 25 years. In Colombia it has had technical assistance from the International Labor organization but is financed by a payroll tax levied on all private sector firms above a certain size, and by a tax on all public payrolls. The program is separate from the educational system and is intended to provide occupational skills for students about to enter the labor force as well as those currently employed who meet certain minimal levels of schooling. The program is not only free but offers a small maintenance stipend. Selection procedures consist of a written test and a personal interview. Even though the supply of cheap post-primary education

is scarce relative to the demand, the drop out rate is about 50%. One study of SENA students five to seven years after completing their program found them to possess superior intelligence, motivation and self discipline compared with other youths their age. It concluded also that the program had a selection effect, a recruiting advantage, and a job information benefit which got the students into better employment networks. Participants with only a primary education showed the greatest marginal increases. The researchers concluded that if cheap post primary education were more plentiful, SENA's ability to recruit good students might decline and its impact on earnings might drop.

A new intergrated rural development program called Núcleos de Desarrollo Educativo was initiated in 1977 and was functioning in two national territories and was underway elsewhere as well. The Ministry of National Education reported in 1981 that it expected to have had some 2500 such núcleos in operation in 180 districts by the end of 1982.

Other research reported that 90% of non-formal education projects are located in state capitals. Not until the decade of the 1970's was there a tendency to place these programs in rural areas. Those projects which last the longest are those located in the departmental capitals with the highest levels of development. Most of the consumers of the non-formal educational services are women and nearly all of the clients in programs surveyed have some form of employment although 73% lacked formal education. The non-formal education, unlike the formal, placed greater emphasis on education for work, on health and family education, and community education.

Basic literacy instruction amounted to only 11.8% of the total effort.

Summary

An extensive study of education in Colombia in 1978 by Augusto Franco Arbeláez and Carlos Tünnerman Blenheim listed the following as the most acute problems of education: (1) the profound cultural differences, which are associated with social and economic inequality in the population, (2) the lack of basic and applied educational research, especially of a social and curricular nature, particularly as these relate to instructional methods and the content of the curriculum in particular regions of the country, (3) the lack of coordination in programs of adult and informal education, (4) the poor quality of teaching personnel, particularly the high proportions of uncertified teachers, (5) the lack of sufficient attention to pre-school education, (6) the inequitable distribution of public educational opportunities, particularly the discrepancy between the urban and the rural sectors, (7) the weaknesses in the statistical information available.

A few years later, in 1981, the Department of National Planning was able to report an impressive extension of educational services, especially in rural elementary education. It noted that a good infrastructure of physical facilities had been developed and there had been a substantial increase in teaching personnel. At the same time, the Department expressed concern with the increasing cost of educational programs and recommended a halt to the proliferation of secondary normal schools. In general, the national government appears to have made remarkable progress in recent years, given the

political constraints on its activities, in bringing more and better educational opportunity to the masses of its citizens.

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